

# Green Garden News

## A New Cockroach Invades

The Asian cockroach has made its way up from Central Florida and is now established in the Panhandle. The Asian roach was first identified as a newly introduced species to the United States in 1986 when a professional pest control operator collected these insects in Lakeland, Florida. Entomologists believe they most likely were introduced into the U.S. through imports from Japan.

You may have seen Asian roaches and thought they were our common German roach. That's because adults of both species are almost identical in appearance. They both are about 5/8 inch long, brown to dark brown in color, and have two distinct parallel bands running the length of the pronotum, the area just behind the head. There are some slight morphological differences. For example, the wings of the Asian roach are usually longer and narrower than those of the German. However, Asian roaches generally are distinguished from their German relatives by where they live and how they behave.

The Asian roach normally lives outdoors in grass, leaves, or shaded mulched areas. Populations of 30,000 to 250,000 insects per acre have been reported. This species is a strong flier capable of sustained

flight up to 120 feet. The German roach is not capable of sustained flight and prefers to live indoors.

Asian roaches become very active at dusk and adults are attracted to light-colored surfaces and brightly lit areas. They will invade any opening in a house, such as a lighted doorway or window. Once inside, they will crawl on an illuminated television screen and on walls while the lights are on during the evening.

Control of Asian roaches is difficult due to their mobility and abundance in outdoor sites. Treatments with residual sprays inside and around the perimeter of a structure are often ineffective due to numerous infestations in mulched and wooded areas. Even if populations within a yard are reduced, reinfestation is likely because of their ability to fly relatively long distances. Plus, adults enter homes through windows and doorways, avoiding areas typically treated for control of German roaches.

If using residual spray treatments focus on the exterior of the structure and treat in late afternoon/early evening. Pay close attention to spraying areas around or close to

*(Continued on page 6)*

Volume 3, Issue 5

May 2005

### Inside this issue:

May Gardening Tips	2
New UF/IFAS Publications	2
New Zinnia Varieties	3
Upcoming Events	4
Record Size Vegetables	4
Questions & Answers	5

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, age, handicap or national origin.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, IFAS, FLORIDA A.&M. UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING

The use of trade names is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product names.

# May Gardening Tips

## Flowers

- Annuals to plant include celosia, coleus, crossandra, gaillardia, geranium, hollyhock, impatiens, kalanchoe, marigold, nicotiana, ornamental pepper, pentas, phlox, portulaca, salvia, torenia, verbena, vinca and zinnia.
- Fertilize annual and perennial flowerbeds. Choose a product that contains nitrogen and potassium, but little or no phosphorus for this purpose.
- Rejuvenate houseplants. Take them outdoors and inspect for spider mites and mealy bugs. Shift pot bound specimens to a size larger pot.
- Set out caladium bulbs in prepared beds. Plant them 18 inches apart and 2 inches deep.
- Control black spot on roses by applying fungicides on a regular basis.
- Seed sunflowers. Sunflowers are easy to grow in a sunny spot. Look for newer, dwarf varieties.

## Trees and Shrubs

- Finish pruning spring flowering shrubs such as azaleas, spiraeas, camellias and forsythia.
- Water newly planted shrubs and trees frequently until they are well established. Smaller shrubs require about 3 months of special care while new roots are becoming established, while large shrubs and trees require 6 months to a year.
- Watch for pests on ornamentals and control as necessary. Keep an eye out for spider mites on Japanese hollies, lacebugs on azaleas and pyracantha, scales on camellias and hollies and whiteflies on ligustrum and gardenias.
- Mature palms should receive a complete granular



fertilizer formulated for palms ("palm special"). It should be applied uniformly to the entire ornamental planting area (or at least the entire palm canopy area) at a rate of 1.5 lbs per 100 sq. ft. four times per year during the growing season.

## Fruits and Nuts

- Fertilize citrus with a special "citrus fertilizer" like a 10-10-10. Be sure it contains about 1.6% magnesium, about 0.5% manganese and small amounts of copper and boron.

## Vegetable Garden

- Vegetables that can be planted outdoors include eggplant, lima beans, okra, southern peas, and sweet potatoes.
  - On sandy sites, vegetables will require several light, supplemental applications of fertilizer during the season. Choose a product that contains nitrogen and potassium, but little or no phosphorus for this purpose.
  - Check for pests and control them if necessary. Keep an eye out for tomato fruitworm, stinkbugs on vegetables and aphids on all new growth.
- ## Lawns
- Calibrate the lawn sprinkler system so that approximately ½ inch of water is applied at each irrigation. Contact your local Extension Service for specific instructions.
  - Water lawns in the morning to help prevent disease problems.
  - Check for lawn pests and control them if necessary. Keep an eye out for spittlebugs in centipedegrass, chinch bugs in St. Augustinegrass and sod webworm in all turf.

## New UF/IFAS Publications

**Growing Plums in Florida** is available online at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/HS250>.

**Gray Leaf Spot on St. Augustinegrass** is available online at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP126>.

**Asian Tiger Mosquito** is available online at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN594>.

**Yellow Fly** is available online at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN595>.

Not Online? Contact your local Extension Office for a copy

# New Zinnia Varieties Improve a Great Series

The best group of landscape zinnias, the Profusion series, just got better thanks to two new varieties: Fire and Apricot.

The Profusion series put zinnias back in the mainstream garden of America. The Cherry, Orange and White each earned the All-America Selections Gold Medal award. The Profusion series is disease-resistant and blooms from spring until frost. The Fire and Apricot varieties look to have the same superior performance.

If you thought the old Profusion Orange was hot, the Profusion Fire will blow you away with its scarlet and orange. The Apricot is light coral with a rich terracotta center. The plants form dense, compact mounds and are drought-tolerant. The flowers are only 2 inches wide, but they stand out like beacons when you have 50 of them on a plant.

Select a site in full sun with fertile, well-drained soil because they cannot survive wet feet. Prepare the planting area by tilling in 3 to 4 inches of organic matter along with a slow-release, 12-6-6 fertilizer.

Incorporate 2 pounds of the fertilizer per 100 square feet of planting area. Plant nursery-grown transplants at the same depth they are growing in the container, spacing 10 to 12 inches apart. Apply a layer of mulch after planting.

Feed with a light application of fertilizer one month after transplanting and every four to six weeks through the growing season. If the shape of the mound becomes less than desirable, prune lightly to generate more growth and blooming for the fall garden. The Profusion series is also outstanding as a mid-summer or fall planted crop and absolutely loves September and October.

The Profusion zinnias are 15-by-15 inches and perfect for the front of the border. Profusion

Orange and Fire are outstanding with Victoria Blue salvia, Indigo Spires and Dark Knight caryopteris. Profusion Apricot is incredible with coleus like Tilt-a-Whirl and ornamental grasses like Purple Fountain. Profusion White and Cherry excel with purple- to burgundy-leaved plants such as Purple Heart, Mississippi Summer sun coleus and Purple knight alternanthera.

While on the subject of zinnias, don't forget about the new Magellan series this spring. The Magellan Coral is an All-America Selections winner this spring, and based on the trials at the Truck Crops Experiment Station in Crystal Springs, I can tell you all of the colors look like award winners.

The Magellan zinnias produce enormous, dahlia-like flowers on short, stocky plants reaching 18 inches tall so that they need no staking and will not fall over.



Leaf spotting disease was minimal, making the Magellan series an environmentally friendly performer in the Southern landscape.

The Magellan zinnias offer colorful, dahlia-like blossoms that look good grown as a mixture or in single colors. They can be planted in any style garden, from the tropical to the cottage.

Feeding will be an important part of your success with the

Magellan zinnias, as it is with the Profusion series. Feed with light monthly applications of a slow-release fertilizer like a 12-6-6. Another key step is to keep your flowers deadheaded, which not only gives a tidy look but also keeps those blossoms coming.

Magellan zinnias will produce these flowers right until freezing weather arrives. Look for both the Profusion and the Magellan series at your local garden center this spring.

—by Norman Winter, MSU Horticulturist  
Central Mississippi Research & Extension Center



## Upcoming Events

**May 7, 2005: *Fresh from the Market, Flowers for Mom.*** Sale of Mother's Day plants and flowers. Riverwalk Market, one block south of Highway 90 on Willing Street, across the street from the Santa Rosa County Veteran's Memorial Plaza.

**May 14, 2005: *Spring Harvest Kickoff.*** Cooking demonstrations using fresh, local produce from 8:30 until 11:30 a.m. Riverwalk Market, one block south of Highway 90 on Willing Street, across the street from the Santa Rosa County Veteran's Memorial Plaza.

**May 14, 2005: *Spring Garden Festival and Open House.*** Sponsored by UF/IFAS Escambia County Extension and the Escambia County Master Gardeners. The festival will be from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and includes plants for sale by exhibitors, garden demonstrations, rain gardens and home building information with George Rogers. Master Gardeners will also be giving homeowners a plant or two to help begin their landscape renovation and offer tool sharpening (limit of two tools). The Escambia County Extension Office is located at 3740 Stefani Road. For more information call 475-5230.

**May 19, 2005: *Gulf Coast Gardening From the Ground UP: Diagnostic Clinic.*** This free program is open to the public and will be presented at the Milton Library at 5541 Alabama Street, Milton, FL. Registration will open at 6:00 pm and the clinic will start at 6:30 pm. Theresa Friday, Santa Rosa County Horticulture Agent, will be present to discuss your individual plant problems with you. Feel free to bring in samples of your flowers, shrubs, soil or grass for diagnosis.

**May 21, 2005: *Gulf Coast Gardening From the Ground UP: Diagnostic Clinic.*** This free program is open to the public and will be presented at the Navarre Library at 8484 James M. Harvell Road, Navarre, FL. Registration will open at 9:30 am and the clinic will start at 10:00 am. Theresa Friday, Santa Rosa County Horticulture Agent, will be present to discuss your individual plant problems with you. Feel free to bring in samples of your flowers, shrubs, soil or grass for diagnosis.

For persons with disabilities requiring special accommodations, please contact the SRC Extension Office at least 5 working days prior to the program so that proper consideration may be given to the request.  
(850) 623-3868

## Two New Record-Size Vegetables in Florida

Two Florida vegetable records have been broken this year and it's only May!

Ms. Charlotte Lee of Lake Worth, Fla. harvested a 44 lb. - 2 oz. sweet potato on January 8, 2005. Gene Joyner, Extension Agent, submitted this record-size sweet potato grown in Palm Beach county.

A record-size turnip of the 'Just Right' variety was grown by Mr. Ray Comans of Navarre, Fla. and harvested on February 7. The turnip weighed in at 21 lbs. - 11 oz. with a 43-inch circumference. Dan Mullins, Extension Agent, submitted this record-size turnip grown in Santa Rose County.

Although retired, Jim Stephens still keeps up with Florida's biggest. The system he employs still requires the assistance of Extension agents in each county following guidelines established in 1989. Prior to that year, no one kept records of big vegetables grown in Florida.

Palm Beach County holds the most Florida records with 12 out of the 53 kept. Santa Rosa County holds three records.

For a complete list of the current record-size vegetables visit <http://www.hos.ufl.edu/vegetarian/05/April/Stephens.htm>.

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** My gardenias are flowering, but they have become overgrown and don't have a desirable shape. When is the best time to prune them?

**A:** Prune as soon as they have finished flowering. This will be sometime in mid to late June. Don't delay more than a few weeks because gardenias will need time to make summer growth and initiate buds before fall. Avoid any heavy pruning during the fall, winter or early spring. The removal of an occasional unsightly branch or excessively vigorous shoot can be done any time that it occurs.

Research in Florida indicates that pruning should be done after flowering, but early enough to allow new growth to be at least 4 to 6 inches long by early October. Pruning after October 1st would decrease next year's blooms.

**Q:** I've already seen a few mole crickets. How do I get rid of them?

**A:** Many people apply an insecticide during late winter to early spring (February-April) to control mole crickets. This is a waste of time, money and product. Insecticide treatments in the spring, when only adults are present, are not recommended because adults are not easily killed and the chances of reinfestation from subsequent flights and unhatched eggs are high.

The best time to treat for mole crickets, based on extensive research, is during **mid June through July**. Proper timing of the insecticide application is one of the most important parts of mole cricket management. Although lawns can suffer some damage in the spring, it's better to mark areas of mole cricket activity and target those areas for treatment in mid June through July after the eggs have all hatched and before the nymphs (immature mole crickets) are large enough to do much damage. But don't treat at all if there is no evidence of mole cricket activity.

During the mid June through July time frame, you can use a soap flush technique to confirm mole cricket activity. Mix 1½ fluid ounces of a lemon scented liquid dishwashing soap in two gallons of water in a sprinkling can or bucket. Pour

the soapy water over an area approximately four square feet where you suspect mole crickets are active. Count the number of mole crickets that emerge. It only takes several minutes for mole crickets to crawl to the surface after the soap treatment if they are present. Repeat the process around the yard where you suspect mole cricket problems. If you flush an average of two to four crickets per site, treat the lawn with an insecticide. Follow up with spot treatments if any crickets escape the first insecticide treatment.

There are a number of products on the market to control mole crickets. Look for products that contain the following active ingredients: bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, fipronil, imidacloprid, lambda-cyhalothrin or permethrin. Before using any product for mole cricket control first identify the problem as mole cricket damage by using the soap flush technique. Then choose an insecticide that lists mole crickets on its label. And finally read the container carefully for use directions, application techniques, irrigation requirements and precautions.

**Q:** Some of the leaves on my southern magnolia tree have turned yellow and have begun to fall. Is this normal? If not, what is causing this and what can I do?

**A:** The condition that you describe is perfectly normal at this time of year. Southern magnolia is an evergreen, but even evergreen trees and shrubs shed leaves periodically and replace them with new ones - just not all at once like deciduous trees do. Imagine how weather beaten, bug eaten and tired a leaf would look if it stayed on a tree for 20 or 30 years!

Watch other broadleaf evergreen plants over the next month or so and you will see the same thing happening. Typically, about 10 to 30 percent of the leaves will turn a bright yellow and fall, to be quickly replaced with new foliage. Though not as visible as is seen on magnolia, this happens every May or June on such plants as evergreen azaleas, gardenias, hollies and camellias.

# Cockroach Invades

*(Continued from page 1)*

lights and around entry point such as windows and doors. You should also spray the ground around the perimeter, especially grass, leaf piles, mulched areas, or other such places where these roaches are most likely to crawl, feed or hide. Limiting outdoor lighting from dusk until three hours after sundown will help prevent entry into the home. Sodium vapor lamps for security lighting and yellow incandescent bulbs for porch lighting are less attractive to adults and would thereby reduce attraction to lighting near buildings. Although Asian roaches are susceptible to all labeled pesticides, toxic palletized baits applied to infested areas outdoors have provided the most reliable control. For more information on cockroaches and their control contact your local county Extension office.

—by Michael Donahoe, County Extension Director, Santa Rosa County



## **Santa Rosa County Extension Service**

6263 Dogwood Drive  
Milton, FL. 32570-3500

Newsletter compiled by:

---

Theresa Friday  
Extension Agent I  
Environmental Horticulture  
Phone: 850-623-3868  
E-mail: [theresaf@co.santa-rosa.fl.us](mailto:theresaf@co.santa-rosa.fl.us)  
Website: <http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/extension/horticulture/index.html>

**SANTA ROSA COUNTY EXTENSION SERVICE**  
**6263 DOGWOOD DRIVE**  
**MILTON, FL 32570-3500**

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE PAID  
MILTON, FL  
PERMIT NO. 68